

I would like to open this hearing with some brief comments about what I feel lies at the heart of this matter: integrity and trust. On another sports reform issue I have been working on, it has been my pleasure to be involved with a very special individual. A hero. In the 1960 Olympics, a young man won the light heavyweight gold medal. He went on to capture the heavyweight championship of the world three times in his career. He has moved the world with the dignity and courage he has displayed in struggling with the cruelest of diseases. And who will ever forget the climax of the opening ceremony of the Atlanta Olympic games, the image of Ali lighting the Olympic torch. Ali. It is a name for history. We adore Ali because he embodies courage, excellence, and determination. We adore Ali because he represents a human ideal we all dream of.

In many ways, the Olympics represent that same set of ideals. It is the transcendent athletic event. There is not a person in this room today, or watching at home, that could not conjure up an image of past Olympics that has moved them to sheer joy with some fantastic display of athleticism, of perseverance, or courage. A young and victorious Cassius Clay with his arms in the air, the 1980 U.S. hockey teams gold medal performance, a young gymnast, broken from an earlier fall, swallowing the pain to deliver a gold medal for her team. These images are the Olympics, and they belong to all of us, they belong to the ages. For a few weeks, every two years, the world comes together to cheer a competition that holds forth, not who we are, but who we want to be.

But something has happened to the Olympics. The ideal of amateur competition is long gone. The production of the Olympic Games themselves has become an unparalleled commercial vehicle. The Olympics have become big business. However, the organizations that hold the public trust, the keepers of the Olympic flame, have failed to adjust to this reality. They have failed to change the organizational structures of their institutions to ensure accountability and transparency. This failure to reform has led to a culture of corruption, a culture of lavish travel and gift giving, bribe taking and exploitation that has tarnished the Olympic rings.

And now we are here. At its core, this issue is about the integrity of an institution and the public trust. This is something my colleagues are very aware of. In a democracy, our institutions rise and fall on the public trust. In a free world, trust is the foundation on which we build the institutions of our culture and our society.

What has happened in the Olympic movement is not unique in history. Certainly, it is not the first institution to struggle with corruption, to cope with the loss of public trust. But, if these organizations fail to address this crisis quickly and decisively, they will find themselves thrown upon the ash heap of history. Reform is a difficult thing. I do not envy the task of the people we will hear from

today. Because to reform, you must upset the status quo. Reform generally means surrendering comfort and privilege, and by nature this is not something easily embraced. Reform often means alienating colleagues and friends. Reformers are rarely popular among their peers. However, history tends to judge them kindly. They restore our hope, and faith in our ideals.

I commend the Salt Lake City Olympic Committee for confronting this scandal head-on. I am certain they will host a fantastic Olympics in 2002. I commend the USOC in appointing the Mitchell Commission and adopting the reforms contained therein. And I look forward to hearing from the IOC representatives regarding what the organization plans to do about the culture of corruption so evident in the Olympic bid process.

This Committee is given oversight jurisdiction on sports. My distinguished colleague, Senator Stevens, authored the Amateur Sports Act which governs the Olympic movement here in the United States. It is estimated that well-over 60 percent of IOC revenues come from U.S. broadcast rights and sponsorships. The United States consistently sends the largest delegation of athletes to the Olympic games. America has a certain and vested interest in reform.

But more important, for every person who has ever been moved by Olympic excellence; every child who has dreamed of listening to their national anthem, standing with a gold medal around their neck; for every athlete, and every parent, who sacrifices all in the pursuit of the Olympic ideal, the public trust must be restored, the integrity of the Rings must be regained. It is my hope that, within these organizations, there are individuals with the courage to be reformers. It is a heavy burden and the stakes are high. Olympic moments are for the ages. Without reform, I fear that the Olympic ideal will be a relic of the past.